

# Measure Up

Spring 2008

Assessment news for high school teachers



## Facts About NAEP 2009

- Over 1,800 high schools have been selected to participate in NAEP 2009.
- From January 26 to March 6, 2009, over 100,000 twelfth-graders will take the NAEP assessment in reading, mathematics, or science.
- Over 6,000 NAEP staff will administer NAEP 2009 to students in grades 4, 8, and 12 nationwide.
- Eleven states have volunteered for the first 12th grade state-level pilot.

## 2007 Writing Results Released

On April 3, the results of the NAEP 2007 writing assessment were released. Each student responded to 2 tasks, intended to measure one of three purposes for writing: narrative, informative, or persuasive.

Examples of each purpose are provided in *The Nation's Report Card: Writing*. One of the narrative tasks presented students with a poem by William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say." The poem explains that someone has eaten the plums in the refrigerator, which were being saved by someone else. Students are asked to respond to the following prompt: *Imagine that you have just come into your kitchen and that the poem below is a note left for you on the kitchen table. Who wrote the note? How do you feel? What do you do? Write a story about what happens next.* Nationally, 81 percent of twelfth-graders received a score of "Sufficient" or higher on their responses to this writing task.

One of the informative tasks presented students with the following explanatory text: *Many people in this country care more about the way they look and having a lot of nice things, like cars and clothes, than about the problems of society. They do not pay enough attention to problems such as crime, poverty, or unemployment.* Students

were asked to respond to the following prompt: *Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you explain your opinion.* Nationally, 68 percent of twelfth-graders received a score of "Sufficient" or higher on their responses to this writing task.

One of the persuasive tasks began with the following sentences: *The twentieth century has given us inventions that have changed our lives in many ways. Big inventions, like televisions, computers, or microwave ovens, have had such a great impact on our culture that they seem to overshadow the small ones, like ballpoint pens, headphones, or calculators.* Students were asked to respond to the following prompt: *Write an essay in which you argue whether the "big" inventions or the "small" ones play a more important role in **your** daily life and provide reasons to support your position. You may use the examples of inventions given above or come up with some of your own. Give as many examples as you feel necessary to support your position.* Nationally, 60 percent of twelfth-graders received a score of "Sufficient" or higher on their responses to this writing task.

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## Released NAEP Items and Scoring Guides: Valuable Classroom Resources for Instruction

Released NAEP items can be a valuable instructional tool for teachers. After each assessment, NAEP releases some of the questions from the assessment. More than 2,000 questions are available at the NAEP Questions Center (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls>).

In addition to reading, mathematics, and science questions, NAEP has also released questions

for civics, U.S. history, and geography. Teachers can use the search feature for NAEP Questions at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls> to find hundreds of released NAEP questions that can be used for a variety of purposes.

Here is one example of a thought-provoking civics question that can be used as a springboard for classroom discussion or activities, or as a test question to assess an objective at the end of a lesson or unit.

Source: Foy, J. (2007). *NAEP Assessment Toolbox for Teachers: Easy-to-Use Classroom Activities Using Questions and Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, Alaska.

### Sample grade 12 civics question

Members of a community have been arguing about the subject matter taught in the local high school. This argument has led both sides to demonstrate outside city council meetings. Also, one group staged a sit-in at the local board of education. Below are quotes from two citizens who have different opinions about these protests.

**Patrick:** "Government's most important job is to maintain order and protect public safety. How can elected officials ever do their work if people are criticizing them all the time?"

**Elena:** "I think it's important that people let their opinions be known. Protests are okay as long as they are not violent."

What constitutional principle could Elena cite to argue against Patrick? Explain why the principle supports Elena's view.

For more information about these and other released items, visit: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/> and select "Sample Questions."

### Scoring Guide

#### Complete

Response cites an appropriate constitutional principle and clearly explains why it supports Elena's position.

#### Partial

Response cites an appropriate constitutional principle but offers no clear explanation of why it supports Elena's position.

#### Unacceptable

Response gives no appropriate constitutional principle.

### 2006 National Performance Results:

Score	Percentage of Students
Complete	38%
Partial	20%
Unacceptable	21%
Off task	2%
Omitted	18%
	0 100

Note:

- These results are for public and nonpublic school students.
- Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## Sample student responses

### Complete:

*Right of Free Speech. People have a right to voice their own opinion as long as it isn't violent. That's how the government knows if the people like what they are doing.*

#### Scorer's commentary

The response identifies the principle of free speech and explains its importance in keeping the government informed of public opinion.

*We have a first Amendment right to protest and speak what we want if we believe it is for the benefit of all people. If no one voiced a different opinion at times, many changes made in this country would not have been.*

#### Scorer's commentary

The response correctly refers to the First Amendment right to speech and explains its historical importance in leading to change. Although the response is incorrect in suggesting that those seeking First Amendment protection must believe their speech to be "for the benefit of all people," this error does not result in a loss of credit.

### Partial:

*The 1<sup>st</sup> amendment supports Elena.*

#### Scorer's commentary

Students are required, at a minimum, to refer to the First Amendment to receive credit for identifying a constitutional principle. This

response satisfies the minimum requirement. It does not include an explanation of why the principle supports Elena's view and therefore receives Partial credit.

*The right to free speech which is evident in the constitution which is the body of laws that guides our country and the Freedoms of the American people.*

#### Scorer's commentary

The response correctly identifies the right to free speech as a relevant constitutional principle. But, the remainder of the response explains what the Constitution is rather than why the principle of free speech supports Elena's view. Consequently, the response receives a score of Partial.

### Unacceptable:

*Because it's important to hear what other people has to say.*

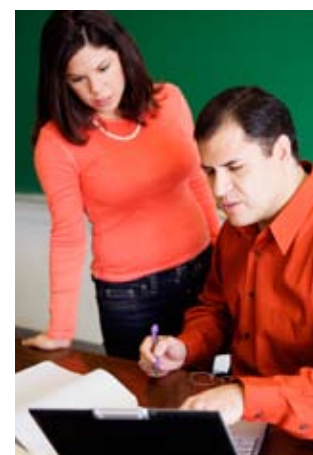
#### Scorer's commentary

The response includes no reference to a constitutional principle and therefore is Unacceptable.

*This is a free country. That is why we have rights as citizens.*

#### Scorer's commentary

The response does not refer to a relevant constitutional principle and is therefore scored as Unacceptable.



## 2007 Writing Results Released - *Continued from page 1*

The 2007 results can be compared to the writing assessments from 1998 and 2002.

At grade 12 in 2007:

- The average score was 5 points higher than in 2002 and 3 points higher than in 1998.
- The percentage of students performing at or above the *Basic* level increased from 74 percent in 2002 to 82 percent and was also higher than in 1998.
- The percentage of students performing at or above the *Proficient* level was higher than in 1998 but showed no significant change since 2002.

- The average scores increased since 2002 for White, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander students.
- The 8-point increase for male students since 2002 contributed to a narrowing of the male–female gap in comparison to 2002, but there was no significant change in comparison to the gap in 1998.

Source: Salahu-Din, D., Persky, H., and Miller, J. (2008). *The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2007* (NCES 2008-468). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

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## What is the Nation's Report Card™?

The Nation's Report Card™ informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

For over three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance for the nation, states, and selected urban districts, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

## If you want to...

## Visit...

<b>Learn</b> more about NAEP results	The Nation's Report Card at <a href="http://nationsreportcard.gov">http://nationsreportcard.gov</a>
<b>View</b> NAEP data for a particular state or contact your NAEP State Coordinator	The National Center for Education Statistics at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states</a>
<b>Access</b> specific results for a grade level, subject, jurisdiction, and/or student groups	The NAEP Data Explorer at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde</a>
<b>Find</b> information regarding the types of questions used on NAEP assessments or to view subject-specific questions	The NAEP Questions Tool at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls</a>
<b>Download</b> a Sample Questions Booklet that contains sample test questions for the upcoming and previous assessments	The National Center for Education Statistics at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/booklets.asp">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/booklets.asp</a>
<b>Learn</b> more about how policy is drafted for each NAEP assessment	The National Assessment Governing Board at <a href="http://www.nagb.org">http://www.nagb.org</a>
<b>Offer</b> a comment or suggestion on NAEP	The National Center for Education Statistics mailbox at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/contactus.asp">http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/contactus.asp</a>